THANKSGIVING IN POETRY

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THANKSGIVING IN POETRY

POEMS

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THE CHILD'S WORLD

Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful world,
With the wonderful water round you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast,
World, you are beautifully drest.

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree—
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the top of the hills.

You friendly Earth, how far do you go,
With the wheat-fields that nod and the rivers that flow
With cities and gardens, and cliffs and isles,
And people upon you for thousands of miles?

Ah! you are so great, and I am so small,
I hardly can think of you, World, at all;
And yet, when I said my prayers to-day,
My mother kissed me, and said, quite gay,

"If the wonderful World is great to you,
And great to father and mother, too,
You are more than the Earth, though you are such a dot!
You can love and think, and the Earth cannot!

William Brighty Rands

THE BEAUTIFUL WORLD

Here's a song of praise for the beautiful world,
For the banner of blue that's above it unfurled,
For the streams that sparkle and sing to the sea,
For the bloom in the glade and the leaf on the tree;
Here's a song of praise for a beautiful world.

Here's a song of praise for the mountain peak,
Where the wind and the lightning meet and speak,
For the golden star on the soft night's breast,
And the silvery moonlight's path to rest;
Here's a song of praise for a beautiful world.

Here's a song of praise for the rippling notes
That come from a thousand sweet bird throats,
For the ocean waves and the sunset glow,
And the waving fields where the reapers go:
Here's a song of praise for a beautiful world.

Here's a song of praise for the ones so true,
And the kindly deeds they have done for you;
For the great earth's heart, when it's understood,
Is struggling still toward the pure and good;
Here's a song of praise for a beautiful world.

Here's a song of praise for the One who guides,
For He holds the ships and He holds the tides,
And underneath and around and above
The world is lapped in the light of His love;
Here's a song of praise for a beautiful world.

W. L. Childress

A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE

Lord, Thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell;
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather-proof;
Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry;
Where Thou, my chamber for to ward,
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me, while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate;
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by the poor,
Who thither come, and freely get
Good words, or meat.
Like as my parlor, so my hall
And kitchen's small;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin,
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipped, unflead;
Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it.
Lord, I confess too, when I dine,
The pulse is Thine,
And all those other bits that be
There placed by Thee:
The worts, the purslain, and the mess
Of water-cress;
Which of Thy kindness Thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet,
To be more sweet.
'Tis Thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth,

And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink.
Lord, 'tis Thy plenty-dropping hand
That soils my land,
And giv'st me, for my bushel sown,
Twice ten for one;
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
Her egg each day;
Besides, my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year;
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream, for wine:
All these, and better, Thou dost send
Me, to this end,—
That I should render, for my part,
A thankful heart;
Which, fired with incense, I resign,
As wholly Thine;
—But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by Thee.

Robert Herrick

A THANKSGIVING

For the wealth of pathless forests,
Whereon no axe may fall;
For the winds that haunt the branches;
The young bird's timid call;
For the red leaves dropped like rubies
Upon the dark green sod;
For the waving of the forests,
I thank thee, O my God!

For the sound of waters gushing
In bubbling beads of light;
For the fleets of snow-white lilies
Firm-anchored out of sight;
For the reeds among the eddies;
The crystal on the clod;
For the flowing of the rivers,
I thank Thee, O my God!

For the rosebud's break of beauty
Along the toiler's way;
For the violet's eye that opens
To bless the new-born day;
For the bare twigs that in summer
Bloom like the prophet's rod;
For the blossoming of flowers,
I thank Thee, O my God!

For the lifting up of mountains,
In brightness and in dread;
For the peaks where snow and sunshine
Alone have dared to tread;
For the dark of silent gorges,
Whence mighty cedars nod;
For the majesty of mountains,
I thank Thee, O my God!

For the splendor of the sunsets,
Vast mirrored on the sea;
For the gold-fringed clouds, that curtain
Heaven's inner mystery;
For the molten bars of twilight,
Where thought leans, glad, yet awed;
For the glory of the sunsets,
I thank Thee, O my God!

For the earth, and all its beauty;
The sky, and all its light;
For the dim and soothing shadows
That rest the dazzled sight;
For unfading fields and prairies,
Where sense in vain has trod;
For the world's exhaustless beauty,
I thank Thee, O my God!

For an eye of inward seeing;
A soul to know and love;
For these common aspirations,
That our high heirship prove;
For the hearts that bless each other
Beneath Thy smile, Thy rod;
For the amaranth saved from Eden
I thank Thee, O my God!

For the hidden scroll, o'erwritten
With one dear Name adored;
For the Heavenly in the human;
The Spirit in the Word;
For the tokens of Thy presence
Within, above, abroad;
For Thine own great gift of Being,
I thank Thee, O my God!

Lucy Larcom

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THANKSGIVING DAY

We give Thee thanks, O Lord!
Not for the armed legions, marching in their might,
Not for the glory of the well-earned fight
Where brave men slay their brothers also brave;
But for the millions of Thy sons who work—
And do Thy task with joy,—and never shirk,
And deem the idle man a burdened slave:
For these, O Lord, our thanks!

We give Thee thanks, O Lord!
Not for the turrets of our men-of-war—
The monstrous guns, and deadly steel they pour
To crush our foes and make them bow the knee;
But for the homely sailors of Thy deep,
The tireless fisher-folk who banish sleep
And lure a living from the miser sea:
For these, O Lord, our thanks!

We give Thee thanks, O Lord!
Not for the mighty men who pile up gold,
Not for the phantom millions, bought and sold,
And all the arrogance of pomp and greed;
But for pioneers who plow the field,
Make deserts blossom, and the mountain yield
Its hidden treasures for man's daily need:
For these, O Lord, our thanks!

We give Thee thanks, O Lord!
Not for the palaces that wealth has grown,
Where ease is worshipped—duty dimly known,
And pleasure leads her dance the flowery way;
But for the quiet homes where love is queen
And life is more than baubles, touched and seen,
And old folks bless us, and dear children play:
For these, O Lord, our thanks!

Robert Bridges

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A HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

"Out of his Treasuries."—Psalms, cxxxv,7.

Thou who art Lord of the wind and rain,
Lord of the east and western skies
And of the hilltop and the plain
And of the stars that sink and rise,
Keeper of Time's great mysteries
That are blindly understood—
Give us to know that all of these
Labor together for our good.

Thou who must laugh at bounding line
Setting the little lands apart;
Thou who hast given corn and wine
Give to us each a thankful heart.
Show us the worth of wounds and scars,
Show us the grace that grows of grief,
Thou who hast flung the racing stars;
Thou who hast loosed the falling leaf.

Count us the treasures that we hold—
Wonderful peace of the wintry lands,
All of the summer's beaten gold
Poured in our eager, out-held hands;
Open the book of the rounded year
Paged with our pleasures and our pains—
Show us the writings where appear
Losses o'er-balanced by the gains.

Thou who art Lord of the sea and shore,
Lord of the gates of Day and Night—
This have we had of Thy great store:
Laughter and love, and life and light,
Sorrow and sweetness, smile and song—
Blessings that blend in all of these—
Have them and hold them over-long,
Out of Thy wondrous treasuries.

Wilbur D. Nesbit

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A PSALM

Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it:
Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water:
Thou providest them corn, when thou hast so prepared the earth.
Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly:
Thou settlest the furrows thereof:
Thou makest it soft with showers.
Thou blessest the springing thereof.
Thou crownest the year with thy goodness;
And thy paths drop fatness.
They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness:
And the little hills rejoice on every side.
The pastures are clothed with flocks;
The valleys also are covered with corn;
They shout for joy, they also sing.

From Psalm Sixty-Five

A PSALM

O come, let us sing unto the Lord:
Let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving.
And show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
And a great King above all gods.
In his hands are all the corners of the earth:
The strength of the hills is his also.
The sea is his, and he made it:
And his hands prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship and bow down:
Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.
For he is the Lord our God:
And we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

For Psalm Ninety-Five

A PSALM

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.
Serve the Lord with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.
Know ye that the Lord he is God:
It is he that hath made us and not we ourselves;
We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:
Be thankful unto him and bless his name.
For the Lord is gracious; his mercy is everlasting;
And his truth endureth from generation to generation.

Psalm One-Hundred

A PSALM

O give thanks unto the Lord for he is gracious:
For his mercy endureth for ever.
O give thanks unto the God of gods:
For his mercy endureth forever.
O give thanks to the Lord of lords:
For his mercy endureth for ever.
To him who alone doeth great wonders:
For his mercy endureth for ever.
To him that by wisdom made the heavens:
For his mercy endureth for ever.
To him that stretched out the earth above the waters:
For his mercy endureth for ever.
To him that made great lights:
For his mercy endureth for ever.
The sun to rule by day:
For his mercy endureth for ever.
The moon and stars to rule by night:
For his mercy endureth for ever.
O give thanks unto the God of heaven:
For his mercy endureth for ever.

From Psalm One Hundred and Thirty-Six

A PSALM

Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving;
Sing praise upon the harp unto our God:
Who covereth the heaven with clouds,
Who prepareth rain for the earth,
Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains,
And herb for the use of men.
He giveth to the beast his food,
And to the young ravens which cry.
Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem;
Praise thy God, O Zion.

From Psalm One Hundred and Forty-Seven

THE LANDING OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS IN NEW ENGLAND

The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods against a stormy sky
Their giant branches tossed;

And the heavy night hung dark
The hills and water o'er,
When a band of exiles moored their bark
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes,
They, the true-hearted, came;
Not with the roll of the stirring drums,
And the trumpet that sings of fame;

Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear;—
They shook the depths of the desert gloom
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard, and the sea;
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free!

The ocean eagle soared
From his nest by the white wave's foam;
And the rocking pines of the forest roared—
This was their welcome home!

There were men with hoary hair
Amidst that pilgrim band;—
Why had they come to wither there,
Away from their childhood's land?

There was woman's fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love's truth;
There was manhood's brow, serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.

What sought they thus afar?—
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?—
They sought a faith's pure shrine!

Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod;
They have left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God.

Felicia Hemans

THANKSGIVING DAY

Brave and high-souled Pilgrims, you who knew no fears,
How your words of thankfulness go ringing down the years;
May we follow after; like you, work and pray,
And with hearts of thankfulness keep Thanksgiving Day.

Annette Wynne

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THE PILGRIMS CAME

The Pilgrims came across the sea,
And never thought of you and me;
And yet it's very strange the way
We think of them Thanksgiving Day.

We tell their story old and true
Of how they sailed across the blue,
And found a new land to be free
And built their homes quite near the sea.

Every child knows well the tale
Of how they bravely turned the sail,
And journeyed many a day and night,
To worship God as they thought right.

The people think that they were sad,
And grave; I'm sure that they were glad—
They made Thanksgiving Day—that's fun—
We thank the Pilgrims, every one!

Annette Wynne

PILGRIM SONG

Written for the Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Pennsylvania

Pilgrims of the trackless deep,
Leaving all, our fathers came,
Life and liberty to keep
In Jehovah's awful name.
Neither pillared flame nor cloud
Made the wild, for them, rejoice
But their hearts, with sorrow bowed,
In the darkness heard His voice.

Things above them they divined—
Thoughts of God, forever true,
And the deathless Compact signed—
Building *better than they knew*:
Building liberty not planned,
Law that ampler life controls,
All the greatness of our land
Lying shadowed in their souls.

In the days that shall succeed,
Prouder boast no time shall grant
Than to be of them, indeed,
Children of their Covenant:
Children of the promised day,
Bound by hope and memory,
Brave, devoted, wise, as they—
Strong with love's humility.

Florence Earle Coates

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HYMN

Written for the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Old South Church, Beverly, Massachusetts.

The sea sang sweetly to the shore
    Two hundred years ago:
To weary pilgrim-ears it bore
    A welcome, deep and low.

They gathered, in the autumnal calm,
    To their first house of prayer;
And softly rose their Sabbath psalm
    On the wild woodland air.

The ocean took the echo up;
    It rang from tree to tree:
And praise, as from an incense-cup,
    Poured over earth and sea.

They linger yet upon the breeze,
    The hymns our fathers sung:
They rustle in the roadside trees,
    And give each leaf a tongue.

The grand old sea is moaning yet
    With music's mighty pain:
No chorus has risen, to fit
    Its wondrous anthem-strain.

When human hearts are tuned to Thine,
    Whose voice is in the sea,
Life's murmuring waves a song divine
    Shall chant, O God, to Thee!

Lucy Larcom

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THE FIRST THANKSGIVING DAY

In Puritan New England a year had passed away
Since first beside the Plymouth coast the English Mayflower lay,
When Bradford, the good Governor, sent fowlers forth to snare
The turkey and the wild-fowl, to increase the scanty-fare:—

"Our husbandry hath prospered, there is corn enough for food,
Though the peas be parched in blossom, and the grain indifferent good.
Who blessed the loaves and fishes for the feast miraculous,
And filled the widow's cruse, He hath remembered us!

"Give thanks unto the Lord of Hosts, by whom we all are fed,
Who granted us our daily prayer, 'Give us our daily bread!'
By us and by our children let this day be kept for aye,
In memory of His bounty, as the land's Thanksgiving Day."

Each brought his share of Indian meal the pious feast to make,
With the fat deer from the forest and the wild fowl from the brake.
And chanted hymn and prayer were raised—though eyes with tears were dim—
"The Lord He hath remembered us, let us remember Him!"

Then Bradford stood up at their head and lifted up his voice:
"The corn is gathered from the field, I call you to rejoice;
Thank God for all His mercies, from the greatest to the least,
Together we have *fasted*, friends, together let us *feast*.

"The Lord who led forth Israel was with us in the waste:
Sometime in light, sometime in cloud, before He hath paced;
Now give Him thanks, and pray to Him who holds us in His hand
To prosper us and make of this a strong and mighty land!"

From Plymouth to the Golden Gate to-day their children tread,
The mercies of that bounteous Hand upon the land are shed;
The "flocks are on a thousand hills," the prairies wave with grain,
The cities spring like mushrooms now where once was desert-plain.

Heap high the board with plenteous cheer and gather to the feast,
And toast that sturdy Pilgrim band whose courage never ceased.
Give praise to that All Gracious One by whom their steps were led,
And thanks unto the harvest's Lord who sends our "daily bread."

Alice Williams Brotherton

"Praise ye the Lord!" The psalm to-day
Still rises on our ears,
Borne from the hills of Boston Bay
Through five time fifty years,
When Winthrop's fleet from Yarmouth crept
Out to the open main,
And through the widening waters swept,
In April sun and rain.
"Pray to the Lord with fervent lips,"
The leader shouted, "pray;"
And the prayer arose from all the ships
As faded Yarmouth Bay.

They passed the Scilly Isles that day,
And May-days came, and June,
And thrice upon the ocean lay
The full orb of the moon.
And as that day on Yarmouth Bay,
Ere England sank from view,
While yet the rippling Solent lay
In April skies of blue,
"Pray to the Lord with fervent lips,"
Each morn was shouted, "pray;"
And prayer arose from all the ships,
As first in Yarmouth Bay.

Blew warm the breeze o'er western seas,
Through May-time morns, and June,
Till hailed these souls the Isles of Shoals,
Low 'neath the summer moon;
And as Cape Ann arose to view,
And Norman's Woe they passed,
The wood-doves came the white mists through,
And circled round each mast.
"Pray to the Lord with fervent lips,"
Then called the leader, "pray;"
And prayer arose from all the ships,
As first in Yarmouth Bay.

Above the sea the hill-tops fair—
God's towers—began to rise,
And odors rare breathe through the air,
Like the balms of Paradise.
Through burning skies the ospreys flew,
And near the pine-cooled shores
Danced airy boat and thin canoe,
To flash of sunlit oars.
"Pray to the Lord with fervent lips,"
The leader shouted, "pray;"
Then prayer arose, and all the ships
Sailed into Boston Bay.

The white wings folded, anchors down,
The sea-worn fleet in line,
Fair rose the hills where Boston town
Should rise from clouds of pine;
Fair was the harbor, summit-walled,
And placid lay the sea.
"Praise ye the Lord," the leader called;
"Praise ye the Lord," spake he.
"Give thanks to God with fervent lips,
Give thanks to God to-day,"
The anthem rose from all the ships
Safe moored in Boston Bay.

Hezekiah Butterworth

THAT THINGS ARE NO WORSE, SIRE

From the time of our old Revolution,
When we threw off the yoke of the King,
Has descended this phrase to remember—
To remember, to say, and to sing;
'Tis a phrase that is full of a lesson;
It can comfort and warm like a fire;
It can cheer us when days are the darkest;
"That things are no worse, O my sire!"

'Twas King George's prime minister said it,
To the King, who had questioned, in heat,
What he meant by appointing Thanksgiving
In such days of ill-luck and defeat.
"What's the cause of your day of Thanksgiving?
Tell me, pray," cried the King in his ire.
Said the minister, "This is the reason—
That things are no worse, O my sire!"

There was nothing come down, in the story,
Of the answer returned by the King;
But I think on his throne he sat silent,
And confessed it a sensible thing;
For there's never a burden so heavy
That it might not be heavier still;
There is never so bitter a sorrow
That the cup could not fuller fill.

And what of care and of sadness
Our life and our duties may bring,
There's always the cause for thanksgiving
Which the minister told to the King.
'Tis a lesson to sing and to remember;
It can comfort and warm like a fire,
Can cheer us when days are the darkest—
"That things are no worse, O my sire!"

Helen Hunt Jackson

A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF HARVEST

Out in the fields which were green last May,
But are rough and stubbed and brown to-day,
They are stacking the sheaves of the yellow wheat,
And raking the aftermath dry and sweet,
The barley and oats and golden rye
Are safely stored in the granary;
Where the pumpkins border the tall corn rows,
The busy reaper comes and goes;
And only the apples set so thick
On the orchard boughs are left to pick.

What a little time it seems since May—
Not very much longer than yesterday!
Yet all this growing, which now is done
And finished, was scarcely then begun.
The nodding wheat and high, strong screen
Of corn were but little points of green.
The apple blossoms were pink and sweet,
But no one could gather them to eat;
And all this food for hungry men
Was but buds or seeds just planted then.

Susan Coolidge

THE FEAST-TIME OF THE YEAR

This is the feast-time of the year,
When plenty pours her wine of cheer,
And even humble boards may spare
To poorer poor a kindly share.
While bursting barns and granaries know
A richer, fuller overflow,
And they who dwell in golden ease
Bless without toil, yet toil to please.
This is the feast-time of the year,
The blessed advent draweth near;
Let rich and poor together break
The bread of love for Christ's sweet sake,
Against the time when rich and poor
Must ope for Him a common door,
Who comes a guest, yet makes a feast,
And bids the greatest and the least.

Unknown

EVERY DAY THANKSGIVING DAY

Sweet it is to see the sun
Shining on Thanksgiving Day,
Sweet it is to see the snow
Fall as if it came to stay;
Sweet is everything that comes,
For all makes cheer, Thanksgiving Day.

Fine is the pantry's goodly store,
And fine the heaping dish and tray;
Fine the church-bells ringing; fine
All the dinners' great array,
Things we'd hardy dare to touch,
Were it not Thanksgiving Day.

Dear the people coming home,
Dear glad faces long away,
Dear the merry cries, and dear
All the glad and happy play.
Dear the thanks, too, that we give
For all of this Thanksgiving Day.

But sweeter, finer, dearer far
It well might be if on our way,
With love for all, with thanks to Heaven,
We did not wait for time's delay,
But, with remembered blessings then
Made every day Thanksgiving Day.

Harriet Prescott Spofford

SINGING THE REAPERS HOMEWARD COME

Singing the reapers homeward come, Io! Io!
Merrily singing the harvest home, Io! Io!
Along the field, along the road,
Where autumn is scattering leaves abroad,
Homeward cometh the ripe last load, Io! Io!

Singers are filling the twilight dim
With the cheerful song, Io! Io!
The spirit of song ascends to Him
Who causeth the corn to grow.
He freely sent the gentle rain,
The summer sun glorified hill and plain,
To golden perfection brought the grain, Io! Io!

Silently, nightly, fell the dew,
Gently the rain, Io! Io!
But who can tell how the green corn grew,
Or who beheld it grow?
Oh! God the good, in sun and rain,
He look'd on the flourishing fields and grain,
Till they all appear'd on hill and plain
Like living gold, Io! Io!

Unknown

SONG OF THE HARVEST

The glad harvest greets us; brave toiler for bread,
Good cheer! the prospect is brighter ahead;
Like magic, the plentiful sunshine and rain
Have ripened our millions of acres of grain;
And the poorest, the wolf may keep from his door—
There'll be bread and to spare another year more.
So sing merrily, merrily,
As we gather it in;
We will store it away gladly
In garner and bin.

We hailed with delight, yet tempered with fear,
The corn as it grew from the blade to the ear;
Lest haply, though large is the surplus in store,
That bread might be dearer for twelve months or more,
But the sunshine and rain, how they ripened the grain
That waited the sickle over hillside and plain!
So sing merrily, merrily,
As we gather it in;
We will store it away gladly
In garner and bin.

Oh, ne'er let us question the Wisdom which guides
Our feet in green pastures, and for us provides;
Who now, as aforetime, His glory displays,
In the bounty that crowns our autumnal days;
Let the glad tidings echo the continent o'er
There'll be bread and to spare another year more!
So sing merrily, merrily,
As we gather it in;
We will store it away gladly
In garner and bin.

Henry Stevenson Washburn

THE PUMPKIN

Oh, greenly and fair in the lands of the sun,
The vines of the gourd and the rich melon run,
And the rock and the tree and the cottage enfold,
With broad leaves all greenness and blossoms all gold,
Like that which o'er Nineveh's prophet once grew,
While he waited to know that his warning was true,
And longed for the storm-cloud, and listened in vain
For the rush of the whirlwind and red-fire rain.

On the banks of the Xenil the dark Spaniard maiden
Comes up with the fruit of the tangled vine laden;
And the Creole of Cuba laughs out to behold
Through orange-leaves shining the broad spheres of gold;
Yet with dearer delight from his home in the North,
On the fields of his harvest the Yankee looks forth,
Where crook-necks are coiling and yellow fruit shines,
And the sun of September melts down on his vines.

Ah! on Thanksgiving Day, when from East and from West,
From North and from South come the pilgrim and guest;
When the gray-haired New Englander sees round his board
The old broken links of affection restored;
When the care-wearied man seeks his mother once more,
And the worn matron smiles where the girl smiled before;
What moistens the lip and what brightens the eye,
What calls back the past, like the rich Pumpkin pie?

Oh, fruit loved of boyhood! the old days recalling,
When wood-grapes were purpling and brown nuts were falling!
When wild, ugly faces were carved in its skin,
Glaring out through the dark with a candle within!
When we laughed round the corn-heap with hearts all in tune,
Our chair a broad pumpkin, our lantern the moon,
Telling tales of the fairy who traveled like steam,
In a pumpkin-shell coach with two rats for her team!

Then thanks for thy present! none sweeter or better
E'er smoked from an oven or circled a platter!
Fairer hands never wrought at a pastry more fine,
Brighter eyes never watched o'er its baking than thine!
And the prayer which my mouth is too full to express,
Swells my heart that thy shadow may never be less,
That the days of thy lot may be lengthened below,
And the fame of thy worth like a pumpkin-vine grow,
And thy life be as sweet, and its last sunset sky
Golden-tinted and fair, as thy own Pumpkin pie!

John Greenleaf Whittier

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HARVEST HYMN

Once more the liberal year laughs out
    O'er richer stores than gems or gold;
Once more with harvest-song and shout
    Is Nature's bloodless triumph told.

Oh, favors every year made new!
    Oh, gifts with rain and sunshine sent!
The bounty overruns our due,
    The fulness shames our discontent.

We shut our eyes, the flowers bloom on;
    We murmur, but the corn-ears fill,
We choose the shadow, but the sun
    That casts it shines behind us still.

Who murmurs at his lot to-day?
    Who scorns his native fruit and bloom?
Or sighs for dainties far away,
    Beside the bounteous board of home?

Thank Heaven, instead, that Freedom's arm
    Can change a rocky soil to gold,—
That brave and generous lives can warm
    A clime with northern ices cold.

And let these altars, wreathed with flowers
    And piled with fruits, awake again
Thanksgiving for the golden hours,
    The early and the latter rain!

John Greenleaf Whittier

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THE CORN-SONG

Heap high the farmer's wintry hoard!
    Heap high the golden corn!
No richer gift has Autumn poured
    From out her lavish horn!

Let other lands, exulting, glean
    The apple from the pine,
The orange from its glossy green,
    The cluster from the vine;

We better love the hardy gift
    Our rugged vales bestow,
To cheer us when the storm shall drift
    Our harvest-fields with snow.

Through vales of grass and meads of flowers
    Our ploughs their furrows made,
While on the hills the sun and showers
    Of changeful April played.

We dropped the seed o'er hill and plain
    Beneath the sun of May,
And frightened from our sprouting grain
    The robber crows away.

All through the long, bright days of June
    Its leaves grew green and fair,
And waved in hot midsummer's noon
    Its soft and yellow hair.

And now, with autumn's moonlit eves,
    Its harvest-time has come,
We pluck away the frosted leaves,
    And hear the treasure home.

There, when the snows about us drift,
    And winter winds are cold,
Fair hands the broken grain shall sift,
    And knead its meal of gold.

Let vapid idlers loll in silk
    Around their costly board;
Give us the bowl of samp and milk,
    By homespun beauty poured!

Wher'er the wide old kitchen hearth
    Sends up its smoky curls,
Who will not thank the kindly earth,
    And bless our farmer girls!

Then shame on all the proud and vain,
    Whose folly laughs to scorn
The blessing of our hardy grain,
    Our wealth of golden corn!

Let earth withhold her goodly root,
    Let mildew blight the rye,
Give to the worm the orchard's fruit,
    The wheat-field to the fly:

But let the good old crop adorn
    The hills our fathers trod;
Still let us, for his golden corn,
    Send up our thanks to God!

John Greenleaf Whittier

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THANKSGIVING DAY

Over the river, and through the wood,
To grandfather's house we go;
The horse knows the way,
To carry the sleigh,
Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river, and through the wood—
Oh, how the wind does blow!
It stings the toes,
And bites the nose
As over the ground we go.

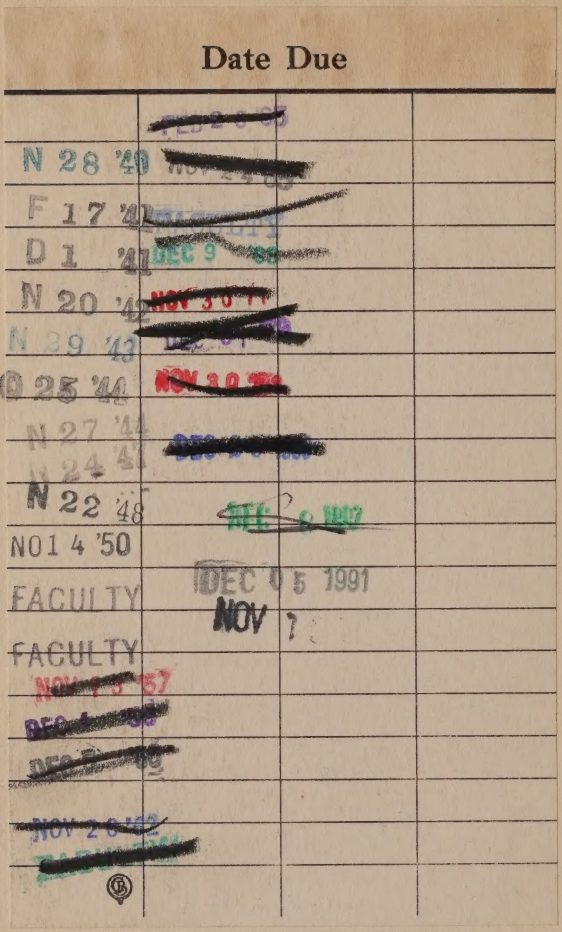
Over the river, and through the wood,
To have a first-rate play.
Hear the bells ring,
"Ting-a-ling-ding!"
Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!

Over the river and through the wood
Trot fast, my dapple-gray!
Spring over the ground
Like a hunting-hound!
For this is Thanksgiving Day.

Over the river and through the wood,
And straight through the barn-yard gate.
We seem to go
Extremely slow,—
It is so hard to wait!

Over the river and through the wood—
Now grandmother's cap I spy!
Hurrah for the fun!
Is the pudding done?
Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!

Lydia Maria Child



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